

Wayne State University
School of Social Work
Detroit, Michigan

Professor Hartford Smith, Jr.
Social Work 3610, Section #002
Thursday, 8:30a.m. - 11:15a.m. - 0165 Main
Office Hours by Appointment (313) 577-4416

Course Syllabus
S.W. 3610 - Organization and Community Change

I. Course Description

Introduction to Macro Theory and Concepts. Examination of social networks, neighborhoods, communities, organizational and interorganizational behavior from a professional social work perspective.

II. Course Domain and Boundaries

This course is part of the Human Behavior and Social Environment sequence in the curriculum and focuses upon organizational and community theory as a background to understanding persons' interactions with their environments. The course builds upon knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences, especially sociology, political science, anthropology and economics.

Students are introduced to the study of neighborhoods and social networks such as peer groups, friendship groups, support groups, self-help groups and "communities of interest." The impact of formal organizations, large complex bureaucracies, work groups, and consensus type organizations on human behavior and social functioning is examined. Community theory and the social work prospective frames the entire course as students learn to apply a change process to organizational and community problems. Infused throughout the course are issues which may have negative impact on organizations and communities such as institutional racism, sexism, and homophobia.

III. Course Objectives

To understand the concept of community in the context of the socio-economic and political systems of the larger society.

To recognize contemporary forces that alter the meaning of community and the influence of locality-based organizations.

To apply social systems model to increase understanding of communities, organizations, neighborhoods and social networks.

To recognize locality-based problems, both from a historical, contemporary and on-going action research perspective.

To develop a strategy for community, organizational and neighborhood analysis and change.

To understand how racism and sexism impact upon communities, organizations and social functioning.

To help students place content on communities and organizations into a professional social work perspective.

IV. Performance Criteria

Demonstration of achievement of the above objectives will be determined by written assignment, class projects, quizzes and analysis of student education at field agency.

V. Course Text

Netting, F.E., Kettner P.M., McMurty, S.L., Social Work Macro Practice, 3rd Edition, Longman Publishers, N.Y. 2003.

VI. Course Outline

Session 1- 1/15

Course overview, assignments and instructor's general expectations regarding the course. Basic definitions and demonstrations of how content on communities and organizations function in the social work curriculum. Understanding and defining social problems.

Sessions 2&3 - 1/22-1/29 (Chapters 1-3)

Review of macro and systems theory and their application to organizations and communities.

3.

Sessions 4&5 - 2/5-2/12 (Chapters 4-6)

The community as a social system. Review of community theories, type of communities and general problems and issues. The impact of mass society on human behavior and social functioning.

Sessions 6,7&8 - 2/19. 2/26-3/5 (Chapters 7&8)

Introduction to organizational and complex bureaucracies. The agency as a social system. Elements of agency system. Impact of agency structure and service delivery systems on various populations. Establishment of goals, objectives and evaluation of outputs. : "Agency Climate," formal and informal networks, "burnout." Impact of racism, sexism, "contextual environment" and management style on organizations.

Session 9 -3/12

Exam on basic concepts and theories.

3/15 -3/19 - Spring Break

Sessions 10,11&12 - 3/25,4/1,4/8 (Chapters 9&10)

Changing organizations and communities - review of theories and methods of planned change, tactics and strategies. Impact of mass media and power and influence on prospects for change.

Sessions 13,14 - 4/15. 4/22

Review of mutual support networks, loosely structured voluntary organizations and self-help groups - prospects and limitations. Course review and evaluation of students' papers and class.

Final Exam -4/29/04

VII. Assignments and Grading Policy

Students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Pass a test on basic concepts to be given 3/12 (30% of final grade).

4.

2. Do an organizational analysis of the agency in which you are placed. Give a physical description of facilities and location. Describe the agency focusing on the variables listed below and come to some conclusion regarding the agency's effectiveness as an organization.

What are the missions, goals and objectives of the agency?

What is the point of view of the agency about the nature and/or causes of the social problems that it seeks to address with its programs and services? Is there consistency between the agency definition of social problems and its statements of mission, goals and objectives.

How well written are the statement of mission, goals and objectives? Do operating programs appear to be consistent with goals and objectives?

How realistic are the agency's goals, objectives and programs based on available social research data regarding the nature and complexity of the problem that the agency is attempting to address?

Does the agency appear to be living up to its mission and goals and is it servicing the population it is supposed to serve in a humane and ethical manner? What is your role as a student, how do you fit in and how are you treated.

Finally, summarize your point of view regarding the overall effectiveness of the agency. **DUE 4/8 (30% OF FINAL GRADE).**

Note: Paper should not exceed 6 pages

Write a three page strategy paper aimed at ending discrimination and oppression within an organization or community against one of the following groups:

African-Americans
Latino Americans

5.

Arab-Americans
Women
Other vulnerable populations with approval of
instructor.

Use one or more of the following strategies:

Mass media appeal
Increased interaction between minority groups and
majority groups
Protest and activism
Legislative change
Other: education, social policy analysis and
dissemination of research (Due 4/22 - 30% of final
grade)

4. Effective class participation - 10% of final grade

Term Paper: Critical Thinking and Analysis Paper

The critical thinking and analysis paper is a reflection of your ability to examine a specific group with respect to its present experience of oppression in society. You must document the impact of oppression on this group with at least five references from refereed journals. You are to evaluate the impact on the individual family and community. Discuss the consequences of oppression and how a social justice model of change could affect systemic inequities. What social goals should American society establish to achieve social justice for all oppressed groups. Discuss what would be the likely consequences for society if oppression of this group is not brought to an end. Finally, what should be the role of social work in ending oppression.

Note:

References should be in the APA format

Content should be informative

grammar, spelling, punctuation, and coherence is very important

Group Project:

Students in small groups of 4-5 members will select a topic of their choice to present to the class. The topic must be relevant to the course content and requires full participation of each member. The topic may involve the results of a community project carried out by the group or a subject area researched by the group that might be directed toward designing and implementing a plan to ensure social justice occurs on the local state and or national level. An outside speaker may be a part of the presentation, but not dominate it. Please feel free to use your creativity and innovativeness in presenting your topic. Remember to include a clear statement of the problem, discussion on how you came to your conclusion, and your expected outcome. You must utilize at least five(5) references for this project. These references must come from refereed Journals.

Each member of the group will receive the same points allotted for the presentation.

Presentations are expected to be informative, relevant and presented in a professional manner.

Should you need equipment , please give two weeks advanced notice. Dates for presentation are on a first come first selection basis.

Part III - Short Essay Continued

7. List and briefly discuss various types of relationships of a Quasi-familial nature used to augment families in low income black communities.
8. Provide a list of general statements about the unique historical conditions and factors that have had significant impact on the social functioning of Black Americans.
9. List and summarize in order of importance policies and programs that are needed to improve the conditions of low-income Black Americans.

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Part III-Short Essay Continued

10. Discuss the impact of the criminal justice system on low-income black urban communities and list the growing concerns of Black Americans regarding recent research findings.

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